

February 2002

## Best Sellers -- Biographies

Francoise Crowell

*Yankee Book Peddler*, [fcrowell@ybp.com](mailto:fcrowell@ybp.com)

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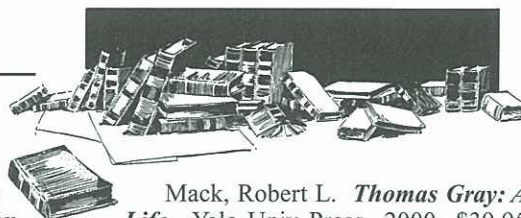
Crowell, Francoise (2002) "Best Sellers -- Biographies," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 14: Iss. 1, Article 30.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.3154>

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# Best Sellers — Biographies

by **Francoise Crowell** (Yankee Book Peddler)  
<FCrowell@YBP.com>



As Americans we love to read about the rich and famous. Magazines such as *People* bring to our attention all the details we need (or not). Perfect reading while waiting at the dentist office. But whose lives interest us in academic circles? Whose lives populate our shelves under biography? The fifty top selling biographies at YBP this last year cross the disciplines, with the politicians certainly bringing in the highest number of votes. In this list are biographies of **Richard Nixon, Robert Kennedy, Madeline Albright, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Jimmy Carter, Al Gore, FDR, and John Adams**. Also here are big names that have definitely marked our century: **Lenin, Hitler and Gandhi**. As a Francophile I was happy to see three French writers, **Proust, Rimbaud, and Molière**, and one queen (**Marie Antoinette**.) But **Virginia Woolf** wins the prize with three top sellers and **Alan Greenspan** with two. My money is on biographies. Are these in your collection?

Lewis, David L. *W.E.B. Du Bois: The Fight for Equality and the American Century, 1919-1963*. Henry Holt 2000 \$35.00 Cloth 0805025340.

## And They Were There from page 75

Director of **Shanghai Library**, drew special attention with his report on his library's experience of personnel reform. As personnel management in Chinese libraries posed serious problems, the successful story of **Wang's** library gave rise to heated discussions and exchanges of questions and responses.

Theoretical studies of librarianship were the topic of the fifth track. Presenters argued that with the exponential advancement of information technology, digitized documents were gradually replacing traditional ones. Therefore, theoretical studies of librarianship must pay great attention to the studies of digital libraries.

During the conference, several workshops were organized, including an introduction to the **International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA)** and approaches on how to write research papers to be submitted to international academic conferences. Out of hundreds submitted, the conference had selected around 50 papers as award winners. It was concluded with a tour to a famous ancient irrigation works project. 🌿

Bix, Herbert P. *Hirohito and the Making of Modern Japan*. HarperCollins 2000 \$35.00 Cloth 006019314x.

Ellis, Joseph J. *Founding Brothers: The Revolutionary Generation*. Alfred A. Knopf 2000 \$26.00 Cloth 0375405445.

Gates, Henry Louis. *African-American Century: How Black Americans Have Shaped Our Country*. Free Press 2000 \$30.00 Cloth 0684864142.

Morris, Roy. *Better Angel: Walt Whitman in the Civil War*. Oxford Univ Press 2000 \$25.00 Cloth 0195124820.

Kershaw, Ian. *Hitler, 1936-45: Nemesis*. W.W. Norton 2000 \$35.00 Cloth 0393049949.

Horne, Gerald. *Race Woman: The Lives of Shirley Graham Du Bois*. New York Univ 2000 \$34.95 Cloth 0814736157.

Sugden, John, 1947-. *Blue Jacket: Warrior of the Shawnees*. Univ of Nebraska 2000 \$29.95 Cloth 0803242883.

Breger, Louis. *Freud: Darkness in the Midst of Vision*. John Wiley 2000 \$30.00 Cloth 0471316288.

Atlas, James. *Bellow: A Biography*. Random House 2000 \$35.00 Cloth 0394585011.

Wolpert, Stanley. *Gandhi's Passion: The Life and Legacy of Mahatma Gandhi*. Oxford Univ Press 2001 \$27.50 Cloth 019513060x.

Summers, Anthony. *Arrogance of Power: The Secret World of Richard Nixon*. Viking 2000 \$29.95 Cloth 0670871516.

Thomas, Evan. *Robert Kennedy: His Life*. Simon & Schuster 2000 \$28.00 Cloth 0684834804.

Stout, Janis P. *Willa Cather: The Writer and Her World*. Univ Pr of Virginia 2000 \$35.95 Cloth 0813919967.

Woodward, Bob. *Maestro: Greenspan's Fed and the American Boom*. Simon & Schuster 2000 \$25.00 Cloth 0743204123.

Carter, Jimmy. *An Hour Before Daylight: Memories of a Rural Boyhood*. Simon & Schuster 2001 \$26.00 Cloth 0743211936.

Marder, Herbert. *Measure of Life: Virginia Woolf's Last Years*. Cornell Univ Press 2000 \$35.00 Cloth 0801437296.

Duiker, William J. *Ho Chi Minh*. Hyperion 2000 \$35.00 Cloth 0786863870.

Mack, Robert L. *Thomas Gray: A Life*. Yale Univ Press 2000 \$39.95 Cloth 0300084994.

Lippman, Thomas W. *Madeline Albright and the New American Diplomacy*. Westview 2000 \$27.00 Cloth 0813397677.

Tadie, Jean-Yves, 1936-. *Marcel Proust: A Life*; Trans. by Euan Cameron. Viking 2000 \$40.00 Cloth 0670876550.

Todd, Janet M., 1942-. *Mary Wollstonecraft: A Revolutionary Life*. Columbia Univ Press 2000 \$29.95 Cloth 0231121849.

Cooper, William J. (William James) *Jefferson Davis, American*. Alfred A. Knopf 2000 \$35.00 Cloth 0394569164.

Rollyson, Carl E. (Carl Edmund) *Susan Sontag: The Making of An Icon*. W.W. Norton 2000 \$29.95 Cloth 0393049280.

Worster, Donald, 1941-. *River Running West: The Life of John Wesley Powell*. Oxford Univ Press 2001 \$35.00 Cloth 0195099915.

Kuehn, Manfred. *Kant: A Biography*. Cambridge Univ 2001 \$34.95 Cloth 0521497043.

Service, Robert. *Lenin: A Biography*. Belknap/Harvard 2000 \$35.00 Cloth 0674003306.

Cooper, Barry, 1949-. *Beethoven*. Oxford Univ Press 2000 \$35.00 Cloth 0198165986.

Schlesinger, Arthur Meier, 1917-. *Life in the Twentieth Century: Innocent Beginnings, 1917-1950*. Houghton Mifflin 2000 \$28.95 Cloth 0395707528.

Cottrell, Robert C., 1950-. *Roger Nash Baldwin and the American Civil Liberties Union*. Columbia Univ Press 2000 \$34.50 Cloth 0231119720.

Taylor, Jay. *Generalissimo's Son: Chiang Ching-Kuo and the Revolutions in China and Taiwan*. Harvard Univ Press 2000 \$39.95 Cloth 0674002873.

Underwood, Thomas A. *Allen Tate: Orphan of the South*. Princeton Univ 2000 \$35.00 Cloth 0691069506.

Meyers, Jeffrey. *Orwell: Wintry Conscience of a Generation*. W.W. Norton 2000 \$29.95 Cloth 039304792x.

Davis, Kenneth Sydney. *FDR: The War President: 1940-1943, A History*. Random House 2000 \$39.95 Cloth 0679415424.

Levine, Suzanne Jill. *Manuel Puig and the Spider Woman: His Life and Fictions*.

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Farrar, Straus & Giroux 2000  
\$27.50 Cloth 0374281904.

Unger, Nancy C. *Fighting Bob La Follette: The Righteous Reformer*. Univ of North Carolina Press 2000 \$39.95 Cloth 080782545x.

Scott, Virginia, 1934-. *Molière: A Theatrical Life*. Cambridge Univ 2000 \$54.95 Cloth 0521782813.

Courtine-denamy, Sylvie. *Three Women In Dark Times: Edith Stein, Hannah Arendt, Simone Weil, Or Amor Fati, Amor Mundi*. Cornell Univ Press 2000 \$45.00 Cloth 0801435722.

Webb, Ruth. *Virginia Woolf*. Oxford Univ Press 2000 \$24.00 Cloth 0195215591.

Martin, Justin. *Greenspan: The Man Behind Money*. Perseus 2000 \$28.00 Cloth 0738202754.

McCullough, David G. *John Adams*. Simon & Schuster 2001 \$35.00 Cloth 0684813637.

Hammer, Martin. *Constructing Modernity: The Art & Career of Naum Gabo*. Yale Univ Press 2000 \$75.00 Cloth 0300076886.

Lever, Evelyn. *Marie Antoinette: The Last Queen of France*; Translated by Catherine Temerson. Farrar, Straus & Giroux 2000 \$30.00 Cloth 0374199388.

Robb, Graham. *Rimbaud*. W.W. Norton 2000 \$35.00 Cloth 0393049558.


Maraniss, David. *Prince of Tennessee: The Rise of Al Gore*. Simon & Schuster 2000 \$23.00 Cloth 0743204115.

Franklin, Caroline. *Byron: A Literary Life*. St. Martins Scholarly 2000 \$35.00 Cloth 0312231520.

Grafton, Anthony. *Leon Battista Alberti: Master Builder of the Italian Renaissance*. Hill & Wang 2000 \$35.00 Cloth 0809097524.

Boyd, Malcolm. *Bach*. Oxford Univ Press 2000 \$35.00 Cloth 0195142225.

Nicolson, Nigel. *Virginia Woolf*. Viking 2000 \$19.95 Cloth 0670894435.

Hodgson, Godfrey. *Gentleman From New York: Daniel Patrick Moynihan: A Biography*. Houghton Mifflin 2000 \$38.00 Cloth 0395860423. 

# Inside Pandora's Box — Suggestions for Improving Customer Service Today

by **Michael Steinmacher** (Assistant Manager, St. Matthews/Eline Branch, Louisville Free Public Library)

Column Editor: **Jack Montgomery** (Western Kentucky University)  
<jack.montgomery@wku.edu>

Improving customer service in any business is neither an easy undertaking nor is it easily accomplished. While the overall planning and implementation of a customer service strategy can be a daunting task, there are some simple steps that can be taken to immediately improve customer service. Today's libraries must acknowledge the need for high quality customer service and integrate it throughout their daily operations. The suggestions offered below can serve as the foundation for an overall customer service plan. Such plans frequently yield increased customer satisfaction, which can lead in turn to a plethora of benefits for the library, including enhanced reputation and increases in budgetary allotments.

Libraries must make an effort now to solidify their increasingly tenuous grip as the world's premier provider of information resources. With the rise of the Internet, commercial information providers, and super bookstore chains such as **Barnes & Noble** and **Books-a-Million**, libraries are increasingly in danger of losing their position as the pre-eminent provider of information sources and services. Some may argue that libraries have already lost that status, a result of resting on their laurels having been the only "game" in town for years. Libraries, however, can learn much from business management approaches to customer service and re-imagine themselves as a hybrid between the information repositories that they always have been and the customer-driven organizations that they must become.

Library literature on improving and integrating customer service into daily operations is on the rise. While this focus upon customer service in library science is a fairly new trend, business literature has focused upon it for years. Much of this is easily applicable to the library setting. The business literature contains a wealth of information for libraries seeking to formally implement customer service plans.

A good example of this trend is the brief article "Flying the Friendly Skies" by **Jeffrey Gitomer**. Gitomer's article, which focuses upon customer service in the airline industry, is easily applicable to the library setting. He

proposes five service lessons for the airline industry:

- Customers only want to resolve problems, not hear yours.
- Listening has nothing to do with hearing. It has everything to do with listening.
- Customers only want to hear one word, "Yes!" They get mad when you give excuses why you "can't."
- When you make a mistake, be professional enough to apologize.
- When you make a commitment, take ownership enough to follow through. (Gitomer 39)

While Gitomer's service lessons are suggested for the airline industry, one can see that they are easily applied to the library setting. This is the case with much of the business literature concerning customer service. Libraries seeking to build a better customer service orientation should consult this wide-body of literature on the subject.

As noted earlier, however, a recent trend in library literature indicates that library scientists have become increasingly attracted to applying customer service principles directly to the library environment. **Karen Hyman**, in her article "Customer Service and the 'Rule of 1965,'" argues this position forcefully. She suggests a number of easily taken steps that can be the beginning of an effort to reshape the library as a more customer-driven operation. Her first point is to "Remember that the customer is not the enemy" (Hyman, 58). She states that many libraries operate on the theory that library users cannot be right and take an adversarial approach to providing service. Her suggestion is that libraries refocus that energy into trying to find methods to meet the customer's wants and desires.

Another way to improve customer service immediately is to constantly remind staff that they should look at things from the perspective of the customer. Staff should be reminded to think how they want and expect to be treated when roles are reversed. Everyone is a customer at some time or another, so imagining this role reversal

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